Ray's Daughter

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CHAPTER I.

The long June day was drawing to its close. Hot and strong the slanting sunbeams beat upon the grimy roofs of the train and threw distorted shadows over the sand and sage brush that stretched to the far horizon. Dense and choking, from beneath the whirring wheels, the dust clouds rose in tawny billows that enveloped the rearmost coaches and, mingling with the black smoke of the "double-header" engines, rolled away in the dreary wake. East and west, north and south, far as the eye could reach, hemmed by low, dun-colored ridges or sharply outlined crests of remote mountain range, in lifeless desolation, the landscape lay outspread to the view. Southward, streaked with white fringe of alkali, the flat monotone of sand and ashes blended with the flatter, flawless surface of a wide-spreading, ash-colored inland lake, its shores dotted at intervals with the bleaching bones of cattle and seamed with ancient wagon tracks unwashed by not as much as a single drop from the cloudless heavens since their first impress on the sinking soil. Here and there along the right of way—a right no human being would care to dispute were the way ten times its width—some drowsing lizards, sprawling in the sunshine along the ties, roused at the sound and tremor of the coming train to squirm off into the sage brush. But no sign of animation had been seen since the crossing of the big divide near Promontory. The long, winding train, made up of mail, express, baggage, emigrant, and smoking cars, "tourists' coaches," and huge sleepers at the rear, with a "diner" midway in the chain, was packed with gasping humanity westward bound for the far Pacific—the long, long, tortuous climb to the snow-capped Sierras ahead, the parched and baking valley of the Great Salt lake long, dreary miles behind. It was early June of the year '98, and the war with Spain was on.

There had been some delay at Ogden. The trains from the east over the Union Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande came in crowded, and the resources of the Southern Pacific were suddenly taxed beyond the expectation of its officials. Troops had been whirling westward throughout the week, absorbing much of the rolling stock, and the empty cars were being rushed east again from Oakland Pier; but the nearest were still some hundreds of miles from this point of transfer when a carload of recruits was dumped upon the broad platform, and the superintendent scratched his head, and screwed up the corner of his mouth, and asked an assistant how in a hotter place than even Salt Lake valley the road could expect him to forward troops without delay "when the road took away the last car in the yard getting those Iowa boys out."

"There ain't nuthin' left 'cept that old tourist that's been rustin' and kiln-dryin' up 'longside the shops since last winter," said the junior helplessly. "Shall we have her out?"

"Guess you'll have to," was the answer. "It's that or nothin';" and the boss turned on his heel and slammed the office door behind him. "Ten to one," said, he, "there'll be a kick comin' when the boys see what they've got to ride in, an' I'll let Jim take the kick."

The kick had come, as predicted, but availed nothing. A score of lusty young patriots were the performers, but, being destined for service in the regulars, they had neither senator nor state official to "wire" to in wrathful protest, as was usual on such occasions. The superintendent would have thought twice before ever suggesting that car as a component part of the train bearing the volunteers from Nebraska, Colorado or Iowa, so recently shipped over the road. "They could have made it hot for the management," said he. But these fellows, these waifs, were from no state or place in particular. They hadn't even an officer with them, but were hurrying on to their destination under command of a veteran gunner, "lanced" for the purpose at the recruiting station. He had done his best for his men. Ruefully they looked through the dust-covered interior and inspected the muddy trucks and brake gear. "She wheezes like she had bronchitis," said the corporal, "and the inside's a cross between a hencoop and coal bin. You ain't going to run that old rookery for a car, are you?"

"Best we've got," was the curt reply. Yet the yardman shook his head as he heard the squeak of the rusty journals, and ordered his men to pack in fresh waste and "touch 'em up somehow." Any man who had spent a week about a railway could have prophesied "hot boxes" before that coach had run more than its own length, but it wouldn't do for an employe to say so. The corporal looked appealingly at his fellow passengers of the Rio Grande train. There were dozens of them stretching their legs and strolling about the platform, after getting their handluggage transferred and seats secured but there was no one in position or authority to interpose. Some seemed to feel no interest.

"Get your rations and plunder aboard," he ordered, turning suddenly to his party, and, loading up with blankets, overcoats, haversacks and canteens, the recruits speedily took possession of their new quarters, forced open the jammed windows to let out the imprisoned and overheated air, piled their boxes of hard bread and stacks of tinned meat at the ends and their scant soldier goods and chattels in the rude sections, then tumbled out again upon the platform to enjoy, while yet there was time, the freedom of the outer air, despite the torrid heat of the midday sunshine.

In knots of three or four they sauntered about, their hands deep in their empty pockets, their boyish eyes curiously studying the signs and posters, or wistfully peering through the screened doors at the temptations of the bar and lunch counter or the shaded windows of the dining-room, where luckier fellow-passengers were taking their fill of the good cheer afforded. Two of the number, dressed like the rest in blue flannel shirts, with trousers of lighter blue and heavier make, fanning their heated faces with their drab, broad-brimmed campaign hats, swung off the rear end of the objectionable car, and with a quick glance about them, started briskly down the track to where the "diner" and certain sleepers of the Southern Pacific were being shunted about.

"Come back here, you fellers!" shouted the corporal, catching sight of the pair. "You don't know how soon this here train may start. Come back, I say," he added, emphatically, as the two, looking first into each other's eyes, seemed to hesitate. Then, with sullen, downcast face, the nearer turned and slowly obeyed. The other, a bright, merry youngster, whose teeth gleamed as he laughed his reply, still stood in his tracks.

"We're only going to the dining-car, corporal," he shouted. "That's going with us, so we can't be left."

"You've got no business in the dining car, Mellen; that's not for your sort, or mine, for that matter," was the corporal's ultimatum. And with a grin still expanding his broad mouth, the recruit addressed as Mellen came reluctantly sauntering in the trail of his comrade, who had submitted in silence and yet not without a shrug of protest. It was to the latter the corporal spoke when the two had rejoined their associates.

"You've got sense enough to know you're not wanted at that diner, Murray, whether Mellen has or not. That's no place for empty pockets. What took you there?"

"Wanted a drink, and you said: 'Keep away from the bar-room,'" answered Murray, briefly, his gray eyes glancing about from man to man in the group, resting for just a second on the form and features of one who stood a little apart, a youth of 21 years, probably. "It was Foster's treat," he added, and that remark transferred the attention of the party at the instant to the youngster on the outskirts.

He had been leaning with folded arms against a lamp post, looking somewhat wearily up the platform to where, in pairs or little groups, the passengers were strolling, men and women both, seeking relief from the constraint and stiffness of the long ride by rail. He had an interesting—even a handsome—face, and his figure was well knit, well proportioned. His eyes were a dark, soft brown, with very long, curving lashes, his nose straight, his mouth finely curved, soft and sensitive. His throat was full, round, and at the base very white and fair, as the unfastened and flapping shirt collar now enabled one to see. His hands, too, were soft and white, showing that at least one of the 20 came not from the ranks of the toilers. His shoes were of finer make than those of his comrades, and the handkerchief so loosely knotted at the opening of the coarse blue shirt was of handsome and costly silk. He had been paying scant attention to his surroundings, and was absorbed, evidently, in his watch on the tourists up the platform when recalled to himself by the consciousness that all eyes were upon him.

"What's this about your treatin', Foster?" asked the corporal.

For a week he had felt sure the boy had money, and not a little. Nothing would have persuaded him to borrow a cent of Foster or anybody else, but others, and plenty of them, had no such scruples.

The young recruit turned slowly. He seemed reluctant to quit his scrutiny of his fellow passengers. The abrupt tone and manner of the accustomed regular, too, jarred upon him. It might be the corporal's prerogative so to address his charges, but this one didn't like it, and meant to show that he didn't. His money at least was his own, and he could do with it as he liked. The answer did not come until the question had been twice asked. Then in words as brief and manner as blunt he said:

"Why shouldn't I?"

Corporal Connelly stood a second or two without venturing a word, looking steadfastly at the young soldier, whose attitude was unchanged and whose eyes were again fixed on the distant group, as though in weary disdain of those about him. Then Connelly took half a dozen quick, springy steps that landed him close to the unmoved recruit.

"You've two things to learn among two thousand, Foster," said he, in low, firm voice. "One is to keep your money, and the other, your temper. I spoke for your own good principally, but if you've been ladling out money to be spent in liquor, I say stop it. There's to be no whisky in that car."

"Nobody wants it less than I do," said Foster, wearily. "Why didn't you keep it out of the other?"

"Because I never knew till it was gone. How much money did you give Murray—and why?" and Connelly's eyes were looking straight into those of Foster as he spoke, compelling respect for sturdy manhood.

"A dollar, I believe," was the languid answer, "and because he asked it." And again the lad's gaze wandered off along the platform.

The switch engine was busily at work making up the train, and brakemen were signaling up and down the line. The dining car, followed by some ponderous sleepers, came gliding slowly along the rails and brought up with a bump and jar against the buffers of the old tourists' ark assigned the recruits. Somewhere up at the thronged station a bell began to jangle, followed by the shout of "All aboard!"

"Tumble in, you men," ordered Connelly, and at the moment there came a general movement of the crowd in their direction. The passengers of

"WHAT'S THAT ABOUT YOUR TREATIN', FOSTER?" ASKED THE CORPORAL.

the sleepers were hurrying to their assigned places, some with flushed faces and expostulation. They thought their cars should have come to them.

"It's because our train is so very long," explained the brakeman to some ladies he was assisting up the steps. "We've twice as many cars as usual. Yours is the next car, ma'am; the one behind the diner."

The recruit, Foster, had started, but slowly, when in obedience to the corporal's order his fellows began to move. He was still looking, half in search, half in expectation, towards the main entrance of the station building. But the instant he became aware of the movement in his direction on part of the passengers, he pushed ahead past several of the party; he even half shoved aside one of their number who had just grasped the hand rail of the car, then sprang lightly past him and disappeared within the doorway. There, half-hidden by the gloom of the interior, he stood well back from the grimy windows, yet peering intently through the swiftly passing crowd.

Suddenly he stooped, recoiled, and seated himself in the opposite section while his comrades came filing rapidly in, and at the moment a tall young officer in dark uniform, a man perhaps of 25, with a singularly handsome face and form, strode past the window, scrupulously acknowledged Connelly's salute, and then, glancing about, saw the heads and shoulders of a dozen soldiers at the windows.

"Why, what detachment is this, corporal?" he asked. "We brought no troops on our train."

"Recruits —the cavalry, sir," was the ready answer. "We came by way of Denver."

"Ah, yes; that explains it. Who's in command?" And the tall officer looked about him as though in search of kindred rank.

"We have no officer with us, sir," said Connelly, diplomatically. "I'm—in charge."

"You'll have to hurry, sir," spoke the brakeman at the moment. "Jump on the diner, if you like, and go through."

The officer took the hint and sprang to the steps. There he turned and faced the platform again just as the train began to move.

A little group, two ladies and a man of middle age, stood directly opposite him, closely scanning the train, and all of a sudden their faces beamed, their glances were directed, their hands waved towards him.

"Good-by! Good-by! Take good care of yourself! Wire from Sacramento!" were their cries, addressed apparently to his head, and turning quickly, he found himself confronting a young girl standing smilingly on the platform of the dining car, her tiny feet about on a level with his knees; yet he had hardly cast an upward glance, for her beaming, beautiful face was but a trifle higher than his own. In all his life he had never seen one so pretty.

Realizing that he stood between this fair traveler and the friends who were there to wish her godspeed; recognizing, too, with the swift intuition of his class, the possibility of establishing relations on his own account, the young soldier snatched off his new forage cap, briefly said: "I beg your pardon; take my place," and, swinging outward, transferred himself to the rear of the recruit car, thereby causing the corporal to recoil upon a grinning squad of embryo troopers who were shouting jocular farewell to the natives, and getting much in the way of train hands who were busy straightening out the bell cord.

Something seemed amiss with that portion of it which made part of the equipment of the old tourists' car. It was either wedged in the narrow orifice above the door or caught among the rings of the pendants from above, for it resisted every jerk, whereat the brakeman set his teeth and said improper things. It would have grieved the management to hear this faithful employe's denunciation of that particular item of their rolling stock.

"Get out of the way here, boys, and let's see what's the matter with this dinged bell cord," he concluded, elbowing his way through the swarm about the door. Once fairly within, he threw a quick glance along the aisle. The left sections of the car were deserted. Out of almost every window on the right side poked a head and pair of blue flannel shoulders.

[To Be Continued.]

TRIED TO BUNCO CLERGYMAN.

The "Panhandlers" Keep a List of Their Victims to Guide Their Future Operations.

One morning a man came to me with a letter written on stamped paper and signed with the name of a clergyman of my church in Massachusets, writes Rev. David M. Steele of "The Lovers of a Cheerful Giver," in Ladies' Home Journal. His story, told in embarrassment, was that he had run away from home. According to the letter his aged mother was dying with grief, and the appeal of the rector was for the man to come back at once. The minister's check for eight dollars, drawn on a bank in this same town, was inclosed with which to pay car fare. He was distressed and was anxious to go, but the difficulty was he had been in New York only five days, knew no one, and could not be identified at the bank. Would I cash the check? I told him to come back in a couple of hours and meanwhile I telegraphed inquiries to Rev. C——. The answer came: "Do not know any such man." When the fellow returned he was arrested, and in his pocket a neatly kept memorandum book was found containing the name of nearly every clergyman in Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. This had been his route. On each page of his book there were four columns headed: "Name, Date, Amount and Remarks," and in these were such entries as: 'Rev. R——; $4.00. Got after an hour's work." "Rev. S——, no good. Can't work. "Rev. T——, $6.00. An easy mark." The dates ran back through three years. When he had completed his tour he would probably either have sold his book to some one else to use, or he would have changed his appearance, invented a new story, and approached a second time the people who were worth it."

"'Twas Ever Thus."

Dix—Is your income sufficient to supply all your needs?

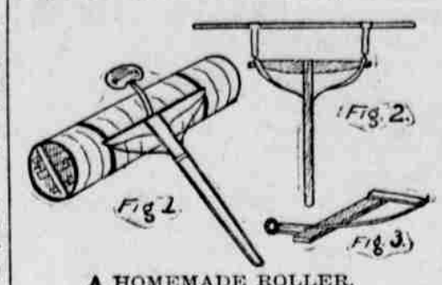
Hix—Yes; but it isn't sufficient to supply half my wants.—Chicago Daily News.

USEFUL SOIL ROLLER.

So Simple in Construction That Any Man of Ordinary Ability Can Make One at Home.

Fig. 1 shows the roller complete. The roller is made of 11 rims from the drive wheels of old binders, iron outside and white oak inside. It is in three sections, the center being made of five rims; the outside of three each. To fasten rims together, take three pieces of rock elm or oak, 2x3, and bolt on inside of rims, as shown at a, Fig. 1. All the sections are bolted together in the same manner.

Holes are drilled through the tire of the binder rims to bolt on these three crosspieces. Each section for bearings on ends takes two pieces of



A HOMEMADE ROLLER.

hard wood 2x6, shown at b. These are fastened with wood screws through the tire into the end of the 2x6 piece, as shown by c.

The pole attachment and rod for center is shown at Fig. 2. The pole is bolted to crosspiece (d), the crosspiece being long enough to bolt on brace irons to reach around the end of center section. The crosspiece is made of 2-inch plank, 6 inches at small end and 10 or 12 in center, as shown. Brace irons can be made light from crosspiece to pole, but from crosspiece to rod should be of 2x½, or twisted a little as at e; bend around center rod with set screw to hold in place. Center rod should be heavy, so as to strengthen roller. Washers sufficient must be used to hold sections in place, so as not to rub on pole iron where twisted.

Fig. 3 shows a truss iron to strengthen the piece running from pole and crosspiece (d), to rod. The 2x½ is on top of d, and a lighter piece on the under side of d, running back to near rod and welded or riveted to it. Keep pole from bending down when one is on the seat. Any kind of seat can be attached to pole, as shown in Fig. 1.—R. M. Gale, in Farm and Home.

PREPARING WHEAT LAND.

Success of This Crop Depends Largely Upon Selection of Appropriate Soil and Good Tillage.

The success of this crop depends largely upon the selection of land and the preparation of the soil. The light, sandy and gravelly loam soils which are known as natural wheat land are where this grain flourishes, if the plant elements needed for this crop are abundant and available, yet clay soils with proper manipulation do yield paying crops.

As wheat requires a large supply of nitrogen for good growth, and has at the same time little ability to store it, unless available in the soil, care should be taken to plant where the soil is rich in this plant food element. Clover sod, if broken and sown to some spring crop that requires good tillage, will yield a profitable wheat crop.

"Plow early for wheat," is a maxim that should not be forgotten. Wheat land must be plowed early to give ample time for preparation of the seed bed, which must be fine and firm. Large yields are often not possible, even in favorable seasons, because of the poorly prepared seed beds. One must not give heed to the number of times the land is harrowed, but keep going until the ground is in right condition. If preparing oat stubble or sod ground, the land can be frequently worked, and a successful wheat grower advises doing this after each shower as soon as the ground is dry enough to permit.

The soil must be firm but mellow. Think how small a grain of wheat is. To have it start well it must have a well-prepared seed bed, where it does not have to send its roots down for some inches before it finds suitable feeding ground, as it does when the surface is cloddy. Start the plows on the wheat land as soon as weather and condition of soil will permit.—Colman's Rural World.

The output of the 175 canneries in Maine is $5,000,000 annually. In ordinary years $50,000 is paid to farmers for sweet corn alone.

The production of sugar cane in the Hawaiian islands is estimated at 310,000 tons for 1900.